

Sunday, Sep 09, 2018

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Put on your kingdom glasses

It's hard to see past appearances. Some creatures are just better looking, whether it's a specimen of tree or flower, fish or bird, or human being. And the lovelier the view, the more it attracts us. The trouble with such distinctions is not in the eye of the beholder, of course, but rather in the heart. Do we value children according to a scale of cuteness or cleverness? Do we choose friends based on zip codes or celebrity? Do we give our attention to the person wearing trendier labels? Put on your kingdom glasses and reverse your instinctive attraction today.

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 35:4-7a; James 2:1-5; Mark 7:31-37 (128).

"Have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs?"

Monday, Sep 10, 2018

Your name here

For Jews, the days starting with Rosh Hashanah and ending with Yom Kippur are known as the Days of Awe or the Days of Repentance. On Rosh Hashanah, meaning the "Head of the Year" or "First of the Year," it is said God writes down who will live and who will die, and who will have a good or bad year. But what people do during the Days of Awe can change God's decision, which God seals in a book on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Jesus says that to inherit eternal life, to have your name written in the Book of Life, you must love God with all your being and your neighbor as yourself. Take a page from this Jewish holy season and look back on the past year, especially what you need to change.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; Luke 6:6-11 (437). *"I ask you, is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?"*

Tuesday, Sep 11, 2018

Decisions, decisions

If you examine the key choices Jesus made in his life, you'll note that before he made them he spent time alone in prayer—often for a good deal of time. Decision-making is never easy, especially when the stakes are high. If Jesus turned to quiet time in prayer at such moments, should we settle for anything less in our own lives? Make sure you take the time you need—and pray for God's guidance—when faced with a big decision. Then you will be able to move forward with trust and confidence once you have made your choice.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 6:1-11; Luke 6:12-19 (438). *"Jesus departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God."*

Wednesday, Sep 12, 2018

MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF MARY

A litany of reasons to praise Mary

The Litany of the Blessed Virgin, in use since 1981, contains traditional elements from May crownings of yesteryear: familiar responses, triple entreaties. But at its heart, it seeks not only to claim but also to define Mary's queenship. She is queen of virtues: charity, mercy, and peace. She is queen over groups: angels, prophets, and martyrs. She is queen of territories: heaven and earth. Pray her litany today.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 7:25-31; Luke 6:20-26 (439).

"Behold, your reward will be great in heaven."

Thursday, Sep 13, 2018

MEMORIAL OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Golden words

A highly educated monk and priest, John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) reluctantly became bishop of Constantinople in 398. He was twice exiled for his criticism of the nobility and other bishops. He earned his name *Chrysostom*, Greek for "golden-mouthed," because of his eloquence as a preacher. He spoke powerfully about worship when he once said, "What is the use of loading Christ's table with gold cups while he himself is starving? Feed the hungry, and then if we have any money left over, spend it on the altar table. . . . What use is it to adorn the altar with cloth of gold hangings and deny Christ a coat for his back!"

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 8:1b-7, 11-13; Luke 6:27-38 (440).

"From the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic."

Friday, Sep 14, 2018

FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

How the cross became holy

Christians are an odd lot. We take what was used as an object of torture and murder—the cross of Christ—and elevate it to a holy state. Just as Christ redeemed us through his death, the cross itself is redeemed through Jesus' saving act. We now place crosses and crucifixes around our necks, pin them to our lapels, and hang them in our homes and churches. We welcome the constant reminder of Jesus' painful death, because it gives us comfort in our own suffering and reminds us of the promise of the Resurrection. The cross is the most universal and powerful symbol of Christianity. Draw on it regularly to give you the strength to find God in all things.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 21:4b-9; Philippians 2:6-11; John 3:13-17 (638). *"God did not send the Son to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved."*

Saturday, Sep 15, 2018

MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS

Her station keeping

On this special feast, the church recommends chanting the words we know more familiarly as the "Stabat Mater": "At the cross her station keeping / Stood the mourning mother weeping / Close to Jesus to the last." Well known by the 14th century, the "Stabat Mater" was probably written by Pope Innocent III in the 12th century and popularized by the Franciscans. Its pathos has made it beloved by Catholics and Protestants alike. It is a powerful reminder that in the realm of sorrow, we have an advocate who knows our grief very well. Our Mother stands ready to share our losses.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 (442); John 19:25-27 or Luke 2:33-35 (639). *"Without dying you won the Martyr's crown beneath the Cross of the Lord."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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